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HIS CITY GIRL

Ward Macauley



THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

Successful Rural Plays

A Strong List From Which to Select Your Next Play

FARM FOLKS. A Rural Play in Four Acts, by ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS. For five male and six female characters. Time of playing, two hours and a half. One simple exterior, two easy interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Flora Goodwin, a farmer's daughter, is engaged to Philip Burleigh, a young New Yorker. Philip's mother wants him to marry a society woman, and by falsehoods makes Flora believe Philip does not love her. Dave Weston, who wants Flora himself, helps the deception by intercepting a letter from Philip to Flora. She agrees to marry Dave, but on the eve of their marriage Dave confesses, Philip learns the truth, and he and Flora are reunited. It is a simple plot, but full of speeches and situations that sway an audience alternately to tears and to laughter.

HOME TIES. A Rural Play in Four Acts, by ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS. Characters, four male, five female. Plays two hours and a half. Scene, a simple interior—same for all four acts. Costumes, modern. One of the strongest plays Mr. Tubbs has written. Martin Winn's wife left him when his daughter Ruth was a baby. Harold Vincent, the nephew and adopted son of the man who has wronged Martin, makes love to Ruth Winn. She is also loved by Len Everett, a prosperous young farmer. When Martin discovers who Harold is, he orders him to leave Ruth. Harold, who does not love sincerely, yields. Ruth discovers she loves Len, but thinks she has lost him also. Then he comes back, and Ruth finds her happiness.

THE OLD NEW HAMPSHIRE HOME. A New England Drama in Three Acts, by FRANK DUMONT. For seven males and four females. Time, two hours and a half. Costumes, modern. A play with a strong heart interest and pathos, yet rich in humor. Easy to act and very effective. A rural drama of the "Old Homestead" and "Way Down East" type. Two exterior scenes, one interior, all easy to set. Full of strong situations and delightfully humorous passages. The kind of a play everybody understands and likes.

THE OLD DAIRY HOMESTEAD. A Rural Comedy in Three Acts, by FRANK DUMONT. For five males and four females. Time, two hours. Rural costumes. Scenes rural exterior and interior. An adventurer obtains a large sum of money from a farm house through the intimidation of the farmer's niece, whose husband he claims to be. Her escapes from the wiles of the villain and his female accomplice are both starting and novel.

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THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

HIS CITY GIRL

A Comedy in One Act

By

WARD MACAULEY

Author of "Back to the Country Store," "Graduation Day at Woodhill School," etc.



PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1921

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His City Girl

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His City Girl

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY THORPE.....*The cashier of the store*
JOHN PLUMMER.....*The head clerk*
JOSHUA THORPE.....*Who owns the store*
ALICE WINTHROP.....*Back from the city*
MRS. PACKARD.....*A customer*
MRS. RANSOM.....*Another customer*
MR. POTTER.....*Who has good eyes*
MR. BARHAM.....*A customer*
GEORGIE BAKER...*A victim of suggestive salesmanship*

COSTUMES AND GENERAL DIRECTIONS

“His City Girl” is very easily performed and sure to be very effective if proper attention is given to the choosing of the cast and to the arrangement of the properties in the grocery store. It is easy to borrow all the necessary material, and the more real the store is made to appear, the more effective the play will be. Comedy in placards, etc., should be avoided.

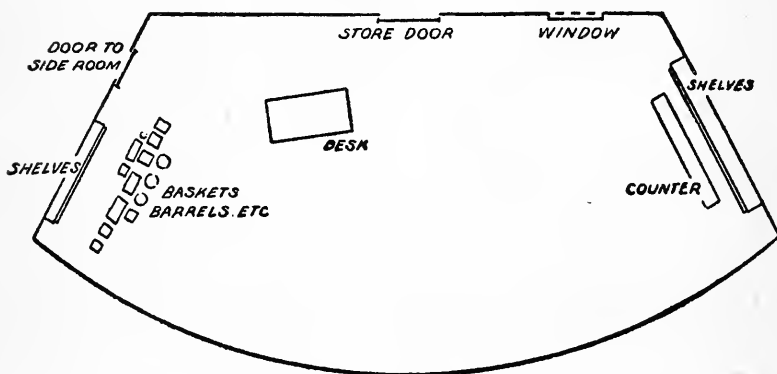
Particular care should be used in selecting those who are to play the various parts. Mary Thorpe is a sweet, unassuming girl of twenty-one or two; John Plummer an unaffected manly fellow two or three years older. Joshua Thorpe is around fifty, with a crafty expression and somewhat whiny voice. He pays little attention to personal appearance. Alice Winthrop is a stunning girl of twenty-four, attired in fashionable clothes, and with an air of realizing that she is distinctly in the

swim. The part should not be overplayed or burlesqued, however. Mr. Barham and Mr. Potter are rather poorly dressed, middle-aged men. Mrs. Ransom and Mrs. Packard are plainly but neatly dressed.

The effort should be made to make all the business as lifelike as possible, and particularly to avoid haste in the various transactions.

Proper attention to these details will insure a smooth and successful performance.

SCENE PLOT



His City Girl

SCENE.—JOSHUA THORPE'S *General Store in Oakville.*
Interior. Morning of a June day. The curtain discovers JOHN and MARY. MR. BARHAM, with several packages, is leaving at the store door, c.)

JOHN. Well, I'm glad he's gone. It seemed to me that the customers would never stop coming.

MARY. That would please Uncle Joshua.

JOHN. You're right, Mary. A dime looks pretty big to him.

MARY. John!

JOHN. Did you ever notice how many interruptions you have when you want to do something special?

MARY (*laughing*). Have I? Just as soon as I start making up a balance, doesn't somebody buy a cake of yeast and want change for a ten-dollar bill? But, John, what was it that you wanted to do special?

JOHN. I wanted to see you alone.

MARY. Alone?

JOHN. Yes, I want to say good-bye to you. You know you and I have been just like brother and sister working together. We haven't had a quarrel yet.

MARY (*laughing*). Hardly like brother and sister, John.

JOHN. Just like a brother and sister ought to be. Anyway, it is going to be hard for us to break it all off. We've been associated so closely and have grown to think a lot of each other. I wish I didn't have to leave you here in just this way.

MARY. John, you mustn't speak like that.

JOHN (*doggedly*). Well, I don't. It isn't going to be pleasant for you. Your uncle ——

MARY. I can manage him.

(*Enter MR. POTTER, C.*)

MR. POTTER. How are strawberries to-day, John?

JOHN. Pretty good to-day, Mr. Potter; see how big and juicy they are?

POTTER. Huh! Don't go showing me the top of the box. I'm on to your tricks. You grocers are all alike. I've traded with a lot of 'em, and I can't see much difference.

JOHN. You can see for yourself, Mr. Potter.

POTTER. You're right. I don't use specs yet a while. I'm going to see for myself, you can bet your sweet life.

(*He digs down to the bottom of the box.*)

JOHN (*with confidence*). Seeing is believing.

POTTER (*triumphantly*). Just as I thought. Here's one down near the bottom that ain't ripe.

JOHN (*looking at it*). It is a little green. I hadn't noticed.

POTTER. You notice it now, don't you, young man? You up and take one out of that other box and give it to me.

JOHN. I don't know whether I should.

POTTER. You had better. It's obtaining money under false pretenses.

JOHN. All right.

(*He takes a strawberry from another box.*)

POTTER. I get what I pay for, young man. You grocers are all alike, every one of you, just like two peas out o' the same pod. But you can't flimflam me. It ain't the one berry I'm thinking about. It's the principle o' the thing. I wasn't born yesterday nor the day before.

JOHN. I'm sure I want you to get your money's

worth, Mr. Potter. Let me say good-bye. You know I'm leaving to-morrow.

POTTER. I heard something on it. Where you calculating on going?

JOHN. Over to Westville. I just fell into luck somehow or other. Mr. Jenkins took a fancy to me and he's asked me to be his head clerk, and if I make good I'm to get a small interest in the business.

POTTER. Let me give you a little advice before you go. Don't take anything for granted. Keep your two eyes open and your mouth shut most of the time. Read all the fine print in any contract you sign. Don't lend money without ample security. Keep your feet on the ground. Get a receipt every time you pay out any cash. Watch the string on the packages. Give the customer what he's entitled to and no more. He's entitled to what he can make you give him. Remember what I tell you and you'll get along and have a big bank account some day.

JOHN. But, Mr. Potter, will that make friends?

POTTER. A bank account's a friend that never goes back on you. I hope your customers aren't too shrewd.

JOHN. Too shrewd?

POTTER. Yes, I don't believe you folks here ever made any money off me. I get what I pay for. Where you make your money is off the happy-go-lucky people. Size 'em up and you can tell whether it's safe to give 'em the short end.

JOHN. Why, Mr. Potter, I expect to be honest with everybody.

POTTER. To be sure, to be sure. But still you've got to give some folks a little more than you give others. Here, wrap up these berries for me. Put on an extra sheet of paper, John, I may need it some time. (*While JOHN is wrapping up the berries MR. POTTER picks out one or two luscious berries from other boxes and eats them.*) Well, good-bye, young man. Do as I tell you and you won't have to come back home again.

JOHN. Thank you, Mr. Potter, and good-bye. (MR. POTTER *exits, exultantly, c.*) Well, he's gone.

I wonder who will be the next. Tell me, Mary, are you going to miss me much?

MARY. You know I shall, John.

(Enter MRS. PACKARD, C.)

JOHN (*in disgust*). Watch the store, Mary, while I run over and get my ticket.

MARY. Surely, John. (JOHN *exits rapidly*, C.) You know, Mrs. Packard, John is to leave on the six o'clock train in the morning and he wants to get everything ready to-day.

MRS. PACKARD. John is a good boy, Mary.

MARY. I should say he is a good boy, Mrs. Packard, as honest and as genuine as you will find anywhere.

MRS. PACKARD. He ought to be taking you up to Westville with him.

MARY. Me?

MRS. PACKARD. Yes, you. If two persons were ever meant for each other, it is you and John Plummer.

MARY. Nonsense, Mrs. Packard. He just now said that we were just like brother and sister. Don't you know that John is practically engaged to Alice Winthrop? Ever since they were children it has been understood that they would be married some day.

MRS. PACKARD. Mebbe, but not necessarily to each other.

MARY. Why, John has even shown me some of Alice's letters. That doesn't look as though he had any interest in me—not that way.

MRS. PACKARD. He has, but he doesn't know it. They tell me Alice is coming to-day.

MARY. Yes, on the eleven-ten, but it hasn't been on time for a year. Now that John has got this fine job over at Westville he will probably ask her to-day.

MRS. PACKARD. No matter whether she comes from New York or not, she isn't any too swell for John.

MARY. No, indeed.

MRS. PACKARD. I am sorry that he's leaving you with that uncle of yours.

MARY. Now, Mrs. Packard —

MRS. PACKARD. Oh, he knows what I think of him. I've told him enough. If it was only for him, I'd never set my foot inside the door.

MARY. I owe him a duty, Mrs. Packard. He has always taken care of me.

MRS. PACKARD. You don't owe him to slave here fourteen hours a day without being paid a cent for it.

MARY. I get my board and room, Mrs. Packard, and a little spending money.

MRS. PACKARD. Emphasize the "little," Mary. You ought to have a salary, and a good one, too, especially with John gone.

MARY. It's going to be lonesome without John, no matter whom Uncle gets in his place.

MRS. PACKARD. Of course it will, my dear. Say what you will about men folks, we do miss 'em—all except that uncle of yours. But don't you go eating your heart out about John Plummer. If he can't see in the dark that you're miles and miles ahead of any other girl he can get, let him put up with whatever he chooses.

MARY. Why, Mrs. Packard, Alice is a lovely girl, as pretty as a picture, clever, attractive, as sweet as she can be.

MRS. PACKARD. That may all be, but she's not Mary Thorpe. There's only one Mary Thorpe that I've ever seen.

MARY. You are too good. I don't deserve it.

MRS. PACKARD. Not a bit of it. Well, you know what I think about it. I must be getting home. Give me some lemon extract and a bar of Ivory soap. (MARY gets the articles for her and MRS. PACKARD turns to exit, c. At the door.) Remember what I said, Mary. Don't eat your heart out because John Plummer doesn't show ordinary common sense.

MARY (trying to smile). I won't.

(MRS. PACKARD exits, c. MARY turns to her desk and is unable to control herself. She weeps for a mo-

ment, regains control, dries her eyes and turns to her work. After a moment JOHN enters, c.)

JOHN. Here's my ticket, Mary. To see me any one would think I was going about a thousand miles, instead of just over into the next county. That's what a fellow gets for sticking around home all his life. Even this looks like a mighty big move to me. Now that we are all alone, Mary, for a minute anyway, I want to say a word or two. I may not get a better chance. I want to tell you that if you ever need a friend —

MARY (*smiling*). Or a brother?

JOHN. Yes, or a brother, I want you to call on me double quick. I hope you get along all right with your uncle. I hate to run away from you like this, leaving you here alone with him.

MARY. Don't worry about me, John. Uncle Joshua will get some one to help. Of course, I'm going to miss you just like everything and I want you to miss me, too, but I'll get along, and I want to wish you every success and I hope, I hope —

JOHN. Yes, Mary, what do you hope?

MARY. I hope it will be all right between you and Alice.

JOHN (*confidently*). Oh, I guess that will work out all right, Mary; you see I'm fixed now so that I can ask Alice, and I'm going to do it to-day if I get half a chance. No telling when I could come back from Westville. Mr. Jenkins will expect me to buckle down. I hope I suit him all right.

MARY (*proudly*). You will make good, John. Why, they couldn't find a better man in the whole state.

JOHN. It doesn't take much brains to measure out flour and sugar, Mary.

MARY. You'll get further than Westville, John, and I hope things turn out as you wish. I mean between you and Alice.

JOHN. Said like a dear little sister. I guess it will be all right, Mary. You know it's been kind of understood about Alice and me ever since we went to school together. I've never really had any other girl. Of

course, I suppose she's had bushels of fellows after her in New York, a pretty, attractive girl like her couldn't help having, but from what she writes, she hasn't got so far away from me as you might think. She certainly is a wonderful girl, and I guess I'll have to hop some to keep pace with her.

MARY. You are good enough for any girl that ever lived, John Plummer.

JOHN. Flatterer! But anyway, I'll need a bit of brushing up in art, literature and the drama or our conversation will be all on one side. We don't get much chance at drama here in Oakville—only church entertainments or the Odd Fellows' minstrel show. Alice'll make me about twice as smart a fellow in a year or two. You ought to read her last letter, Mary. It sure showed a lot of education.

MARY. You are lucky, John, and I want you to know that you have my very best wishes.

JOHN (*seizing both her hands in his*). You are a wonderful little chum, Mary. I'm going to miss you an awful lot. I never realized how much until the time comes to say good-bye.

MARY. No, you won't, John. You are going to a life full of new interests. It is I that will really miss our companionship.

JOHN. The new interests will never take your place, Mary.

(MR. THORPE *enters, c.*)

THORPE. There you are, loafing again. What is this, anyway, a store or a pink tea?

MARY. Why, Uncle. John is going to-morrow.

THORPE. And he'll go to-day if he doesn't perk up and 'tend to business. I can't pay an extra day's pay while he wastes his time talking nonsense.

JOHN. I guess I haven't worked extra hard to-day, Mr. Thorpe; I'll make you a present of what little I've had time to do.

THORPE (*still sullen*). But you interfere with Mary, and customers don't get 'tended to. I want all cus-

tomers waited on prompt. While I'm on the subject and before we settle up, old man Sawket tells me he has seen you eating apples several times when he came in here. I want you to estimate how many and pay me for them when we settle up.

JOHN (*firmly*). I refuse to do so.

MARY. Uncle, don't be so small.

THORPE (*snarling*). Stop your interrupting. Small, is it, when he's stealing my apples? Eats one every time my back's turned, I'll bet. I guess he will pay for them. If he doesn't I'll see what Judge Swales has got to say about whether clerks can take all the apples they want or not. (JOHN *remains silent*.) Young man, do you understand, I'm going to deduct for those apples!

JOHN. No, you are not.

THORPE. I will, too. You have got to pay me for those apples.

JOHN. I told you that I refuse to do so.

THORPE. Any special reason why you won't pay for what you took?

JOHN. Yes, a very special reason.

THORPE. Well, out with it.

JOHN. I paid for them when I *bought* them. Do you suppose I'd take any of your apples without paying for them? I wouldn't take a piece of string of yours.

THORPE (*mollified*). It's all right as long as you paid for 'em. Why didn't you say so in the first place?

JOHN. Seeing I donate what little work I do to-day, I think I'll finish packing up. I'll be back to relieve you at lunch.

MARY. I have brought my lunch, John.

JOHN. Well, keep an eye on the apples.

(*He exits, c.*)

THORPE. The impudent cub! We're well rid of him.

MARY. Why, Uncle Joshua! You know John is as good a clerk as there is in the state. The customers all like him.

THORPE. Sure they do. Customers always like a

thirteen to a dozen clerk, but that sort of clerk doesn't make any money for the boss. From now on we ain't going to be so liberal. Don't you get to thinking too much about him anyway. They tell me he's got another girl.

MARY. I wasn't thinking of him that way, Uncle Joshua.

THORPE. Yes, you was, too. All the women are always thinking that way. I had a terrible time as a young man keeping away from 'em.

MARY. Jimmy Oliver was in a little while ago, Uncle Joshua. He wanted to see you about taking John's place.

THORPE. He'd better save his shoe leather. No one's going to take John's place.

MARY. Of course, no one can really do what John has been doing, but we'll surely have to have somebody.

THORPE (*sarcastically*). Yes, we'll have to have somebody! Who do you think is running this place, anyway? I want you to understand I'm the boss here, and from now on I'll be boss.

MARY (*faltering*). But surely, Uncle Joshua, you don't intend to get along without a man.

THORPE. Ain't I a man? I'm going to save the twelve dollars a week I threw away on John Plummer. You, too, wasting your time all day. You can just as well wait on trade as not and, besides, I'll be around.

MARY. Yes, you will be around. Why, Uncle, you haven't waited on trade ——

THORPE. Why should I—and pay him for doing it? Listen here. I've made my mind up. We aren't going to have another lazy, good-for-nothing for you to fritter away time with. Put that in your pipe and smoke it, young lady.

MARY. Uncle Joshua, you have no right to speak to me like that.

THORPE. Right or not, I'm doing it. You're going to work from now on, young lady. If you had your way, I'd have a dozen men clerks, bowing and scraping ——

MARY. I won't listen to another word.

(MRS. PACKARD *enters*, c.)

MRS. PACKARD. Oh, Mary, I came back for some olives, a ten-cent bottle, please.

THORPE (*obsequiously*). I can get them, Mrs. Packard. (*He turns to search for them.*)

MRS. PACKARD (*sharply*). Not for me, you can't, Joshua Thorpe. Mary waits on me, or I go over to Swanbeck's from now on.

THORPE (*with a smirk*). Just as you say, to be sure. Mary, my dear, get Mrs. Packard a ten-cent bottle of olives. (MARY *does so*, and MRS. PACKARD *exits*, c.) You and that John Plummer have been setting customers against me. I want you to quit it from now on.

MARY. I have never done so, Uncle Josua. You set people against you yourself.

THORPE. Don't be impertinent. (MR. BARHAM *enters*, c.) What can I do for you, Mr. Barham?

BARHAM. Waiting on trade yourself, be you?

THORPE. Seems like it. I've spent enough for clerks, I guess.

BARHAM. Well, I want to get four pounds of granulated sugar for one thing.

(THORPE *hunts vainly around for the sugar.*)

THORPE. Mary, where did you hide that sugar?

MARY. It's just where it's been for the last two years, Uncle Joshua, right in that barrel.

THORPE. When I put things any place, I don't want you moving 'em, do you hear?

(*He weighs out the sugar.*)

BARHAM. Then I guess mebbe I could use some tar soap. Pretty good for shampoo, so they say.

THORPE (*vainly hunting around*). We've got Queen Anne.

BARHAM. I'm going to wash my head, not the dishes. Ask Mary if she's got it.

THORPE. Guess I ought to know my own stock.

BARHAM. Yes, I guess you ought to.

MARY. We don't keep tar soap, Uncle. He can get it over to Milliken's.

THORPE (*aside to MARY*). Why, o' course, the plagy fool. (*To MR. BARHAM.*) Tar soap's drugs. It ain't groceries. What else?

BARHAM. Guess that's about all I want to-day. Charge it.

(*He exits, c.*)

(*A little boy, GEORGIE BAKER, enters, c.*)

THORPE (*to MARY*). The trouble has been with us right along that we just sell people what they ask for. You can't make money that way. What we've got to do is to sell 'em a lot more. I bet I can just about double up on our sales by putting more ginger into selling stuff. Trouble with John, he never did have no ginger, an' that's what these folks over at Westville ain't found out yet. (*He sees GEORGIE, with his basket.*) Something for you, son?

GEORGIE. My mother sent me over for a yeast cake, a loaf of bread and two bars of Queen Anne soap.

THORPE. All right, my boy, and let me tell you that we've just received a lot o' extra fine er—er—er ——

MARY (*coming to the rescue*). Prunes, Uncle?

THORPE. Certainly. Prunes. I couldn't think o' the word. Just as sweet as honey. Wouldn't you like a couple o' pounds, Georgie?

GEORGIE. Yes, sir.

THORPE (*triumphantly*). See how it is; just as easy as falling off a greased pole. What else have we got special, Mary?

MARY. Those canned beans are good.

THORPE. How about a can o' beans, son? Your folks likes beans, don't they?

GEORGIE. Yes, sir.

THORPE. How many would you like?

GEORGIE. Whatever you say, sir.

THORPE. Guess one'll be all right for a starter. Is your pa a smoker, Georgie?

GEORGIE. Yes, sir. But Ma doesn't let him smoke in the house.

THORPE. Well, you tell him that we've got some extra good smokes just in, twelve cents, or two for a quarter.

MARY. You mean thirteen cents, or two for a quarter, Uncle Joshua.

THORPE (*angrily*). I don't mean no such thing.

MARY. Twelve cents for one. Twenty-four cents for two, Uncle.

THORPE. Look here! There's the two cigars. How much for the two of 'em?

MARY. Twenty-five cents.

THORPE. Well, one of 'em's twelve cents and one of 'em's thirteen cents. Now which one of 'em's which?

MARY. Why, it doesn't make any difference.

THORPE. Quite so. One of 'em's twelve cents and one thirteen cents. So it's twelve cents or two for a quarter, just as I said.

MARY. But if a man only takes one, why not get the thirteen cents?

THORPE. Aw, you make me tired. I've sold cigars off 'n' on for twenty years 'n' I never sold a man *one* yet. They've got to take two. Now, Georgie, here's your stuff, 'n' don't forget to tell your pa what I said about the cigars.

(GEORGIE *exits*, c., *with his basket*.)

(MRS. RANSOM *enters*, c.)

MRS. RANSOM. I want a peck of potatoes.

THORPE. Just a moment. I'll get them for you.

MRS. RANSOM. Get them! What for? I want you to send them up.

THORPE (*with a blank look*). Send them up?

MRS. RANSOM. Of course. You don't suppose I'm going to carry them, do you? (*Looking at her paper*.) And I want a bottle of catsup, a quart of maple syrup, a bag of flour and two dozen fresh eggs. There, have you got them all down?

THORPE. I guess so. When do you want them, Mrs. Ransom?

MRS. RANSOM. I want them right away. I need that flour this very minute. So get them right over and charge them.

(She exits, c.)

THORPE. Well, now, how are we going to get all that stuff over to her place? She lives at least a mile and a half from here.

MARY. I guess you will have to hitch up the horse, Uncle Joshua, and drive over. There will be a lot of deliveries, you know, and now that you are to be the man around here, you will take care of them, I suppose.

THORPE. Don't be impertinent. I have seen girls drive wagons before now. But don't worry that I can't handle it. I've been up against tougher propositions than this and I've never been floored yet.

(Enter GEORGIE, c.)

• GEORGIE. My mother says you sent a whole lot of things she didn't order, Mr. Thorpe, and she made me bring them all back.

(He deposits the prunes and beans on the counter.)

THORPE. I sold them to you, young man, not to your mother.

MARY. Nonsense, Uncle Joshua. You will have to take them back.

THORPE. Well, if I have to, I have to, that's all, but when a thing's sold, it's sold, according to my way o' thinking.

(Grudgingly he accepts the returned merchandise and turns to put it into stock. GEORGIE exits, c.)

(ALICE WINTHROP enters, c. She looks about her somewhat haughtily.)

MARY. Why, hello, Alice. I am awfully glad to see you.

ALICE. I am glad to see you again too, Mary. You are looking real well and quite blooming. The country agrees with you, I see. I could never stand it myself. How do you do, Mr. Thorpe? Is Mr. Plummer here?

THORPE. If you mean young John Plummer, no, he ain't.

ALICE. Could you inform me if he is likely to return soon?

THORPE. I don't know when he's coming back and I don't care a snap either.

MARY. Why, Uncle ——

THORPE. I don't, anyway.

MARY (*to ALICE*). He will be here in just a moment, I'm sure. Won't you wait?

ALICE. Not for more than a few minutes. I don't fancy waiting around grocery stores.

MARY (*respectfully*). Of course not.

ALICE (*disdainfully*). What a junky little shop you have here; everything in a heap. Now, in New York, the grocery shops are simply wonderful.

THORPE. Shops, did you say, Miss?

ALICE. Certainly, shops. Don't you have shops here?

THORPE. Sure, blacksmith shops and machine shops. But I can 'preciate what you said about the place being junky. I'm going to change all that. From now on we keep things ship-shape. Now I'm going out, Mary, to take that stuff to Mrs. Ransom. Look lively and see that customers get 'tended to.

(*He exits, c.*)

ALICE. What an old bear your uncle is, Mary.

MARY. He doesn't mean anything by his gruff manner.

ALICE. Perhaps not. I couldn't tolerate it. I'm used to nothing but the greatest politeness. In New York the gentlemen are all very gallant.

MARY. I'm sure they must be.

ALICE. A great many of them have been very at-

tentive to me. One of them sent me roses every night for six weeks.

MARY. For six weeks?

ALICE. Yes, indeed; American beauties, too. Ten dollars a dozen at the very least. But finally I gave him up.

MARY. I don't think it is right to be so extravagant. Think of the good that money could do for poor people.

ALICE (*laughing*). You are so provincial, my dear, so very, very provincial. One cannot blame you, though. I was just the same when I lived in Oakville. You remember how I went in for the Odd Fellows' dance and everything like that. Come to New York for six months and I'll change you so your uncle won't know you. New York has done wonders for me. It's too bad that people have to live under such unfavorable conditions. One simply cannot develop.

MARY (*rather stiffly*). I think we are as happy here in Oakville as people are in New York.

ALICE. Happy! How can you be happy when you are so restricted? Besides, happiness is not all. I suppose a cow in the pasture is happy. That is not the idea, my dear. One should be cultured, acquainted with the world's great men in music, art, literature, sculpture. I just adore culture.

MARY. Would you rather be cultured and miserable, or happy and not know so much?

ALICE. Yes, if it were possible to be cultured and miserable. You see, a person who has culture is happy in its possession. Now, take yourself, my dear, what can you tell me about Beethoven?

MARY. He wrote a moonlight sonata, 'didn't he?

ALICE. The obvious answer. I have made an especial study of Beethoven, the man and his music. My paper on the subject won a great deal of praise from people who know what they are talking about.

MARY. I'm afraid ordinary folks like we are here don't always get the time —

ALICE. Time! Time! You have time for all the non-essentials, bread and meat and molasses, but for

the really big things in life, you haven't time. You don't hear such talk in New York.

MARY. The trouble is we have to earn our living.

ALICE. Unless one is cultured, I can't see that it is worth while to live. Come to New York some time and I'll take all these narrow, restricted little Oakville ideas out of your head. You are good-looking, clever too, and New York will make something out of you.

MARY. Thank you, but I'm afraid I'll have to stick to Oakville.

ALICE. And let that bear of an uncle of yours squeeze your ideas tighter than they are already.

MARY. Ideas are a matter of brains, not of where you live, Alice. Here comes John now. I know he'll be glad to see you.

(MARY *unobtrusively exits*, R. JOHN *enters*, C.)

JOHN (*in glad welcome*). Alice!

ALICE. John!

JOHN. I must have missed you at the station. I thought I saw everybody get off.

ALICE. Oh, we came over from Spencer in Uncle Percival's Pierce-Arrow. We had a glorious trip; reached here an hour ago, rather dusty. Of course, I wanted a nice hot bath——

JOHN (*laughing*). And you couldn't get one in Oakville.

ALICE. It seems not, on such short notice.

JOHN (*still laughing*). You'll have to wait until Saturday night, I guess.

ALICE. It looks that way. I've decided to cut my stay here just as short as possible. I'm afraid it's going to be frightfully dull after New York. Unless Oakville has changed more than I think it has. You haven't much culture here.

JOHN. Oakville's a pretty fair town, Alice, and the folks here are mostly pretty good people; gossip a little and all that, but good people nevertheless.

ALICE (*unconvinced*). Maybe. That depends upon

how you look at those things. I cannot tolerate uncultured people. They irritate me.

JOHN. I am afraid I am like the rest, Alice.

ALICE (*horrified*). I hope not. I was just talking to Mary before you came. A nice little thing, but so very, very narrow. The larger world is utterly unknown to her.

JOHN. I am very fond of her, Alice. She has been like a sister to me.

ALICE. It does seem good to see you again, John. I don't see how you can be contented in this place, though.

JOHN (*smiling*). I am not so contented that I can't try for something better. That's why I'm leaving.

ALICE (*delighted*). Leaving? John! Isn't that wonderful? Tell me. You are going to New York?

JOHN. No, Westville. I have been offered a good position in the best store in town with a chance of getting an interest.

ALICE. Oh, dear, still the grocery business. I had hoped, John, that you would develop higher ambitions. I must say I am deeply disappointed. You and I have been such good friends, John. I had hoped you would go in for something more refined.

JOHN. I guess I'm cut out for this line. I'm leaving in the morning, Alice. I wanted to have a little talk with you before I go—something special.

ALICE. Take my advice, John. Don't go to Westville. Strike out in something better worth while, something cultured.

JOHN. Maybe I will some time, Alice. I would like to if it'd please you and if I could do it. Just now, though, I've got to make good on my new job. As I was saying, if I come up to their expectations, they are going to make me a partner.

ALICE (*biting her lip in disappointment*). Really, John, I hate to say it, but the grocery business doesn't interest me a little bit. Unless you can get some higher ambitions into your soul, I am afraid that I shall lose all interest in you, too.

JOHN. But, Alice, dear, you know my ambitions have all been for you—always. I thought that was understood.

ALICE. Your ambitions will have to change their course, John, if you want to please me. I want to tell you about a little poet I met in New York. He writes divinely. Such music in his lines, such melody, such rhythm, such color, such feeling——

JOHN (*a little at sea*). I never cared much about poetry, except Longfellow. “Evangeline” was good.

ALICE. Longfellow? Why, we don’t consider Longfellow at all, not at all. Miss Finch says he is a mere rhymster. But Mr. Parnells! Oh! he reads with such expression. He dedicated a poem to me. “Lily of the Valley,” he called it. A beautiful thing. I just wish you could meet him; then you’d understand what I mean by culture.

JOHN. But as I was saying, Alice, all of my ambitions have been for you. I was so glad when this offer came because I thought it would please you. Have you forgotten, Alice, what we have been to each other, what we said to one another the night you said good-bye?

ALICE. No, I haven’t forgotten, John, I shall never forget. But think, think how immature I was then—how little I knew or understood the world. We have grown apart, John. I see that clearly. I can never go back to where you are, John, and your ambition doesn’t lead you to where I desire. I am sorry. Oh, John, if you had only come to New York.

JOHN. But, Alice, dear, I love you. My every thought since those days in school has been with you in mind.

ALICE. I don’t believe you really love me, John. You love what you think I am, or rather what you think I ought to be. Why, you are of another world. If you love me, come to New York; brush the rough corners off; be somebody; meet people that count; get culture; write; compose music; paint; act; do some-

thing fine and big. Why, John, I could never in the world come back to this. We should be miserable.

JOHN (*sadly*). I'm sorry, Alice. My dream is shattered. But you are right. I can see that. We are of different worlds. We can't get across to each other. I'm plain every-day John Plummer and I'd rather wear a straight jacket than a dress suit.

ALICE. I think I'll probably go back to-morrow. I expected to stay a week, but it would seem like eternity. I'm glad to have seen you again, John. Good-bye. And if you ever do come to New York, be sure to come and see me. (*Offers her hand.*)

JOHN. Good-bye, Alice.

(*She exits, c.*)

(JOHN *seems serious and preoccupied for a moment. He walks over to the desk, straightens out a few papers and walks up and down in deep thought. MRS. PACKARD enters, c.*)

MRS. PACKARD. Well, John Plummer, what on earth's the matter with you? You look as glum as Ben Fancher's turkey the day before Thanksgiving.

JOHN. Not glum—just thinking.

MRS. PACKARD. And if I were you, I'd do a whole lot of thinking.

JOHN. A fellow ought to think.

MRS. PACKARD. Think first and act afterward, say I. Most folks do it the other way. Now take you. If you do any real high class thinking, you'll realize what every one else sees as plain as the nose on Mr. Leroksbury's face, and that extends pretty near to the next county. You'd realize that you and Mary Thorpe are just made for each other and you'd quit thinking any nonsense about a city girl that's almost forgotten you.

JOHN. I'm beginning to realize it.

MRS. PACKARD. Beginning! Gracious, beginning never made Columbus discover America. Get down to brass tacks. Mary would take my head off if she

knew what I'm saying, but I'd like to see you two happy.

JOHN. I've always thought a lot of Mary. She has been a wonderful chum.

MRS. PACKARD. Of course she has, and she'd make a wonderful wife—you mark my words.

JOHN. I don't need to have you tell me, Mrs. Packard. There isn't a finer girl in America than Mary Thorpe.

MRS. PACKARD. Well, I've said my say; don't you stop with beginning to realize it, young man.

JOHN. Of course, Mary wouldn't think of me that way—now, would she, after what's happened?

MRS. PACKARD (*at the door*). Ask her, young man, not me.

(MRS. PACKARD *exits*, C.)

JOHN (*calling after her at the door*). Don't think you told me anything I didn't see myself, Mrs. Matchmaker. (MRS. PACKARD'S *laugh can be heard outside. After a moment, MARY enters R. unobtrusively and busies herself at the desk. JOHN is thinking seriously. Coming to a sudden decision.*) I can't say good-bye, Mary. I just can't do it, that's all, I've had my eyes opened. I have been hugging a little bit of romance to my heart all these years, thinking it was love.

MARY (*quietly*). Then she said no, John?

JOHN. I didn't ask her. I couldn't; we saw at once that we weren't meant for each other at all. It was just a childhood fancy.

MARY. Oh, John, if she had never gone to New York! The city has changed her so.

JOHN. I'm glad she went to New York. I'm glad she has changed. It makes me realize something that I ought to have seen long ago.

MARY. What is that, John?

JOHN (*very seriously*). That I love you, Mary. Listen—this is true, every word. Life seemed all a blank over there at Westville without you. I thought Alice would make up for it, but I can't talk comfort-

ably to her for ten minutes. And to spend my whole life that way! I've realized right along that I loved you, Mary, but you see I've just trained myself so much to think that Alice and I were going to be married that I thought that you and I were more like chums or brother and sister. When I came to leave I saw how mistaken I was. I won't miss Alice a little bit, but I can't figure out how I could possibly get along minus Mary Thorpe. If I go out of that door alone, I go the most miserable man in the whole world.

MARY (*smiling skeptically*). Oh, not in the whole world, John. The world's a large place.

JOHN. The whole world and Mars, too, if that's inhabited, as Mr. Potter insists it is.

MARY. Who do you want to go with you, John?

JOHN. You—and no one else.

MARY. Look here, John Plummer, I am not willing to be any consolation prize or second choice or anything of that kind. Answer me truthfully—if either Alice or I were willing to—to—go out that door with you, are you very sure you wouldn't prefer Alice?

JOHN. Sure as can be, Mary. Why, I'd be a bachelor from now till kingdom come if I had to marry Alice or no one. Why, I just wouldn't dare.

MARY. This all seems very sudden, John. I haven't thought of anything else but that you would marry Alice.

JOHN (*earnestly*). There isn't a thing sudden about it. I have always loved you. I think you have had a certain amount of affection for me. The only mistake was in the brand, and a label doesn't make a bit of difference. Put a tomato label on that can of corn, it would still be corn. So my love has always been right there, though my affair with Alice fooled me so that I got the labels mixed up.

MARY. A man ought not to be fickle.

JOHN. Try me from now on. I'll give you a written guarantee that I'm one hundred per cent. O. K. as far as non-fickleness goes.

MARY. I've worked side by side with you, John, for

quite a long time. Never have you said a word to lead me to expect this.

JOHN. How could I? I considered myself engaged to Alice—thought I loved her, as far as that goes. Every man makes a mistake or two before the real thing comes. This is the real thing.

MARY. John, are you sure?

JOHN. Am I sure? I'd miss the sun if it didn't shine any more, wouldn't I? When I come to say good-bye, Mary, I realize how much I do love you. I just can't leave you, Mary. Come with me.

MARY. Oh, John, if it were only true!

JOHN. It is true, true as can be. Can't you rely on me, Mary?

MARY. I can rely on you, but never again tell me that it's women who change their minds. (JOHN *looks carefully around and takes MARY in his arms, kissing her.*) Aren't you proceeding a little fast, John?

JOHN (*confidently*). Why, it's all settled. We will be married to-night, Mary.

MARY. To-night? Why, John, I can't get ready.

JOHN (*firmly*). To-night. I am not going to leave you with that uncle of yours. It's a clean slate all round. We start our new life in Westville to-morrow.

MARY (*smiling*). I think I'm making a bad start allowing you to boss me around this way.

(MR. THORPE *enters, c.*)

THORPE. Hey, there, caught you again, didn't I? You'll have to perk up, young lady, beginning to-morrow.

MARY (*with a sly look at JOHN*). I realize that better than you do, Uncle Joshua.

THORPE. I realize it well enough. From now on, we turn over a new leaf. You're going to do as I say.

MARY (*quietly*). Not as you say, Uncle Joshua.

THORPE. I'd like to know why not. As your nearest relation, who'd you owe a duty to more'n me?

JOHN. Why, I'd say to her husband.

THORPE (*scornfully*). Husband, hey? She hasn't got any such article.

JOHN. She will have soon, Mr. Thorpe. Mary is going over to Westville with me. We are going to get married to-night.

THORPE. Well, you plaguing imps. I might have knowned you was up to something—always tittering, and here it was going on behind my back and me as blind as an old fool. Now, you two look here. I can manage the old store m'self, did it before either of you set foot inside of it. Anyways, I'm not the man to snifle. Get along with you and get ready. I'll close the place up long enough to see you married—seeing there's no stopping you.

(MR. BARHAM *enters, c.*)

BARHAM. I want a pound of oyster crackers.

THORPE. All right.

(*Begins to search frantically for the crackers.*)

(*While MARY is speaking, BARHAM asks again for crackers, each time in a louder voice than before.*)

MARY (*to JOHN*). One thing I want distinctly understood, young man. I'm not marrying you to get away from here, but to go with you. And another thing (*roguishly*), I knew whom I loved all the time.

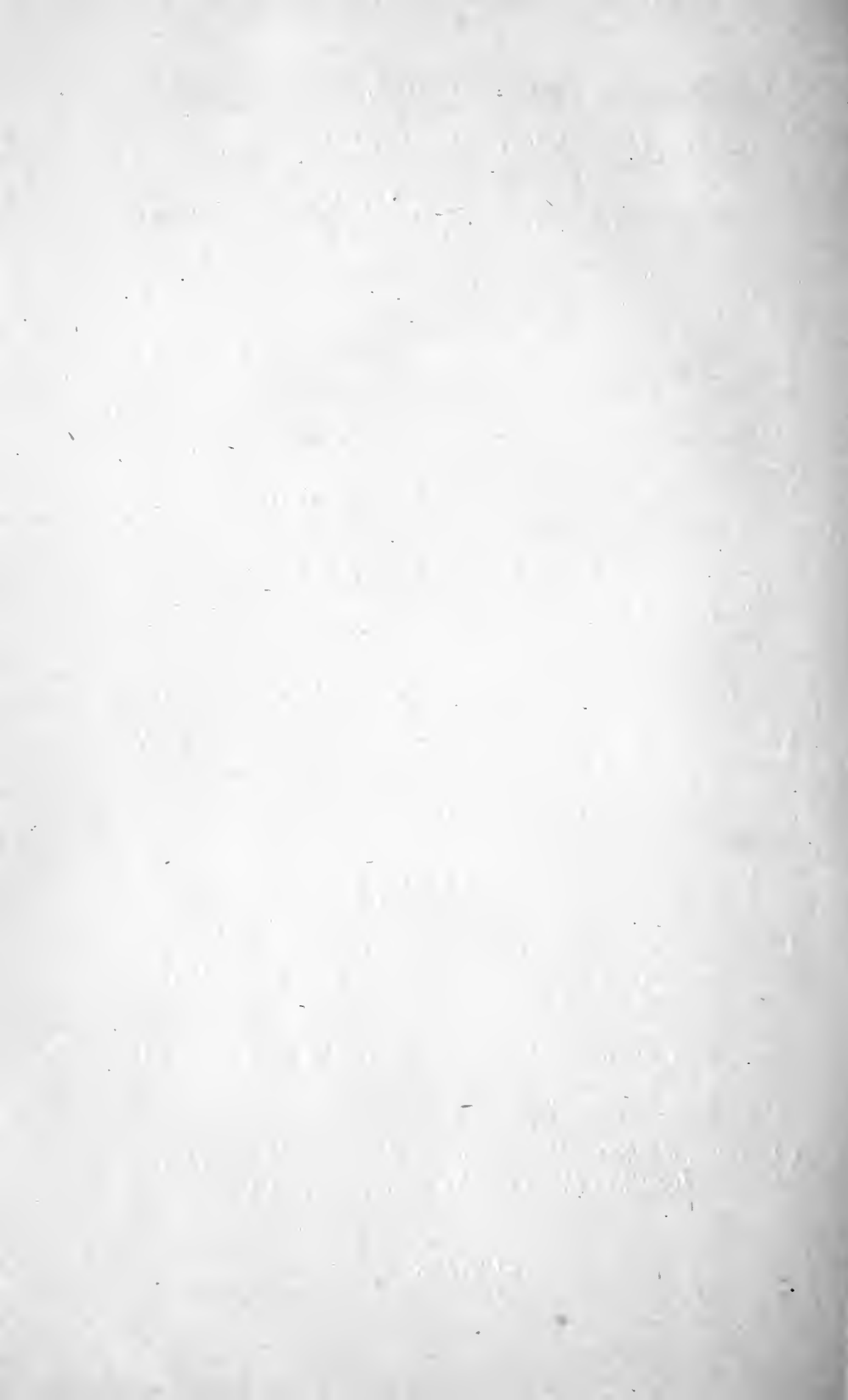
(*JOHN puts his arm around her waist and they exit happily, c. THORPE stops search and regards them spellbound.*)

THORPE (*coming to*). Crackers, 'd you say, Mr. Barham?

BARHAM. Four times I said crackers.

(*THORPE dashes wildly around the store in the search, locating them as the curtain drops.*)

CURTAIN



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SISTER MASONS. A Burlesque in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For eleven females. Time, thirty minutes. Costumes, fantastic gowns, or dominoes. Scene, interior. A grand expose of Masonry. Some women profess to learn the secrets of a Masonic lodge by hearing their husbands talk in their sleep, and they institute a similar organization.

A COMMANDING POSITION. A Farcical Entertainment, by AMELIA SANFORD. For seven female characters and ten or more other ladies and children. Time, one hour. Costumes, modern. Scenes, easy interiors and one street scene. Marian Young gets tired living with her aunt, Miss Skinflint. She decides to "attain a commanding position." Marian tries hospital nursing, college settlement work and school teaching, but decides to go back to housework.

HOW A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET. A Comedy in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For ten female characters. Time, half an hour. Scene, an easy interior. Costumes, modern. Mabel Sweetly has just become engaged to Harold, but it's "the deepest kind of a secret." Before announcing it they must win the approval of Harold's uncle, now in Europe, or lose a possible ten thousand a year. At a tea Mabel meets her dearest friend. Maude sees Mabel has a secret, she coaxes and Mabel tells her. But Maude lets out the secret in a few minutes to another friend and so the secret travels.

THE OXFORD AFFAIR. A Comedy in Three Acts, by JOSEPHINE H. COBB and JENNIE E. PAINE. For eight female characters. Plays one hour and three-quarters. Scenes, interiors at a seaside hotel. Costumes, modern. The action of the play is located at a summer resort. Alice Graham, in order to chaperon herself, poses as a widow, and Miss Oxford first claims her as a sister-in-law, then denounces her. The onerous duties of Miss Oxford, who attempts to serve as chaperon to Miss Howe and Miss Ashton in the face of many obstacles, furnish an evening of rare enjoyment.

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